

Loggerhead Turtles

By Barbara Brown Taylor from her book: *Tales of Terror, Times of Wonder*



Do we trust God to act in all the events of our lives, or only the ones that meet our approval?

Several summers ago I spent three days on a barrier island where loggerhead turtles were laying their eggs. One night while the tide was out, I watched a huge female heave herself up on the beach to dig her nest and empty her eggs into it. Afraid of disturbing her, I left before she had finished. The next morning I returned to see if I could find the spot where her eggs lay hidden in the sand. What I found were her tracks leading in the wrong direction. Instead of heading back out to sea, she had wandered into the dunes, which were already as hot as asphalt in the morning sun.

A little ways inland I found her: Exhausted, all but baked, her head and flippers caked with dried sand. After pouring water on her and covering her with sea oats, I fetched a park ranger who returned with a jeep to rescue her. He flipped her on her back, wrapped tire chains around her front legs, and hooked the chains to a trailer hitch on his jeep. Then I watched horrified as he took off, yanking her body forward so that her mouth filled with sand and her neck bent so far back I thought it would break.

The ranger hauled her over the dunes and down onto the beach. At the ocean's edge, he unhooked her and turned her right side up. She lay motionless in the surf as the water lapped at her body, washing the sand from her eyes and making her skin shine again. A wave broke over her; she lifted her head slightly, moving her back legs. Other waves brought her further back to life until one of them made her light enough to find a foothold and push off, back into the ocean.

Watching her swim slowly away and remembering her nightmare ride through the dunes, I reflected that it is sometimes hard to tell whether you are being killed or saved...by the hands that turn your life upside down.

Our hope, through all our own terrors, is that we are being saved. But this does not mean we lie down before the terrors. For as long as we have strength to fight, it is both our nature and our privilege to do so. Sometimes God's blessing does not come until daybreak, after a full night of emptying ourselves and wandering in the wrong direction. Our job is to struggle with the terrors, neither surrendering nor stealing away until they have yielded their blessing.

How to get “unstuck”

MINDSET:

- Transparency
- Curiosity
- Informed choice
- Accountability
- Compassion

ASSUMPTIONS:

- I may have some info; so do others
- Each of us may see things that others don't
- I may be contributing to the problem
- Differences are opportunities for learning
- People may disagree with me and have pure motives

BEHAVIORS

- State views and ask genuine questions
- Share all relevant information
- Use specific examples and agree on the meaning of important
 - words and concepts
- Explain reasoning and intent
- Focus on interests, not positions
- Test assumptions and inferences
- Jointly design next steps
- Discuss undiscussables!

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CONFLICT

The Rev. Carrie Schofield-Broadbent

1. Conflict is not inherently good or bad. When two or three are gathered... sometimes conflict just happens. Conflict is normal, healthy, natural.
2. Conflict can be a sign of vitality and growth. Conflict energizes and creates interest.
3. We often have a primal response to conflict at first – fight, flight or freeze. We need to deal with our own “stuff” (our assumptions, preferences, history) before we can deal with conflict effectively.
4. Fear is often at the root of conflict, and functions as a barrier to break through in order to manage conflict well.
5. The way we handle conflict in the Church directly relates to how we understand and live into the Gospel.
6. The process of moving through conflict is as important (and sometimes more important) than the outcome.
7. The ultimate goal is moving through conflict is transformation, not just resolution.
8. In conflict, sometimes otherwise normal people will do quite unpredictable things.
9. How we deal with conflict is determined by how we see the world.
10. We have deeply engrained ideas about conflict that we learn from our culture(s) and families.
11. It is the redeeming love of God that makes reconciliation possible.
12. The worst thing that can happen in conflict is sin.
13. The best thing that can happen in conflict is transformation, reconciliation, forgiveness, redemption, and bringing glory to God.

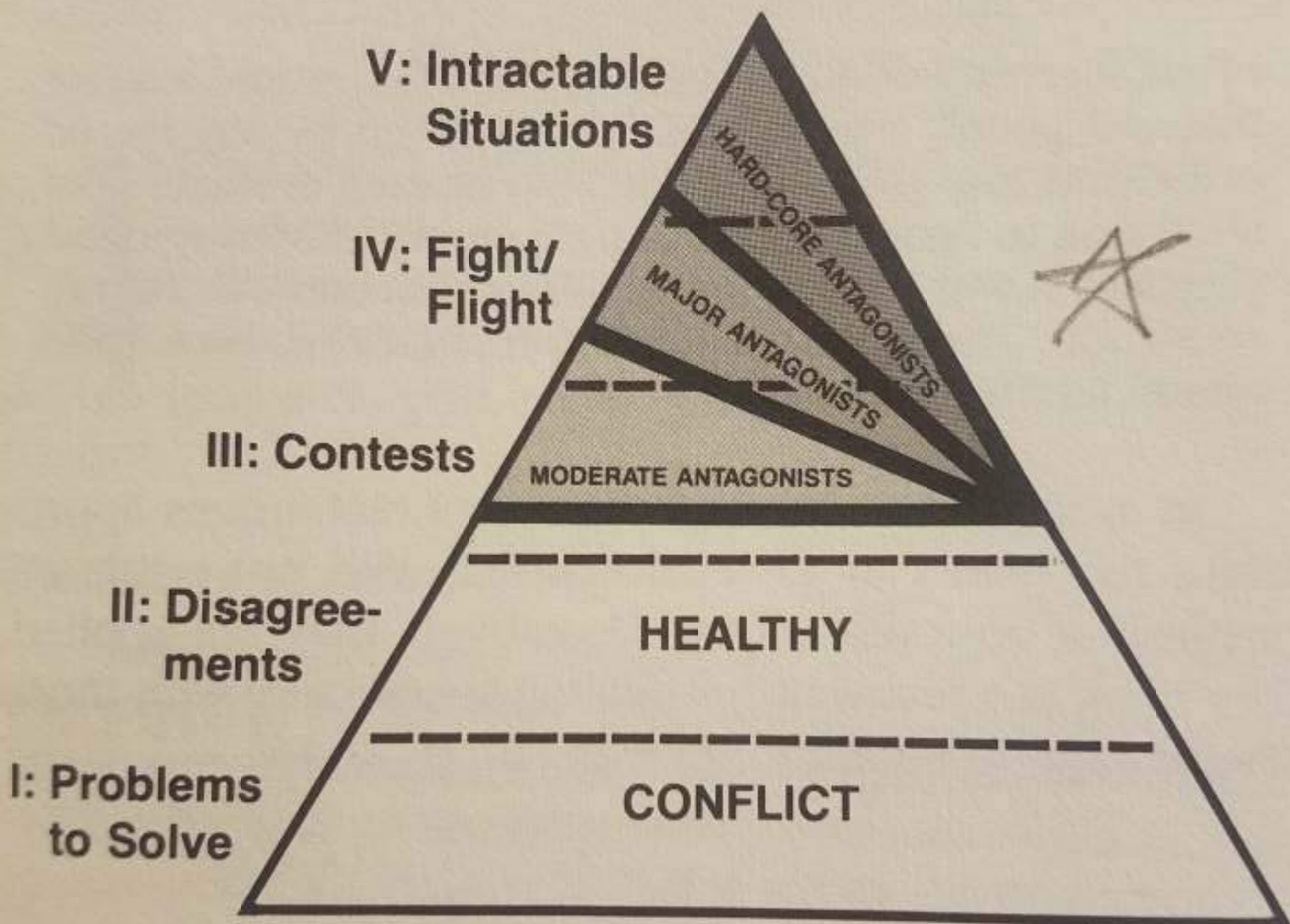
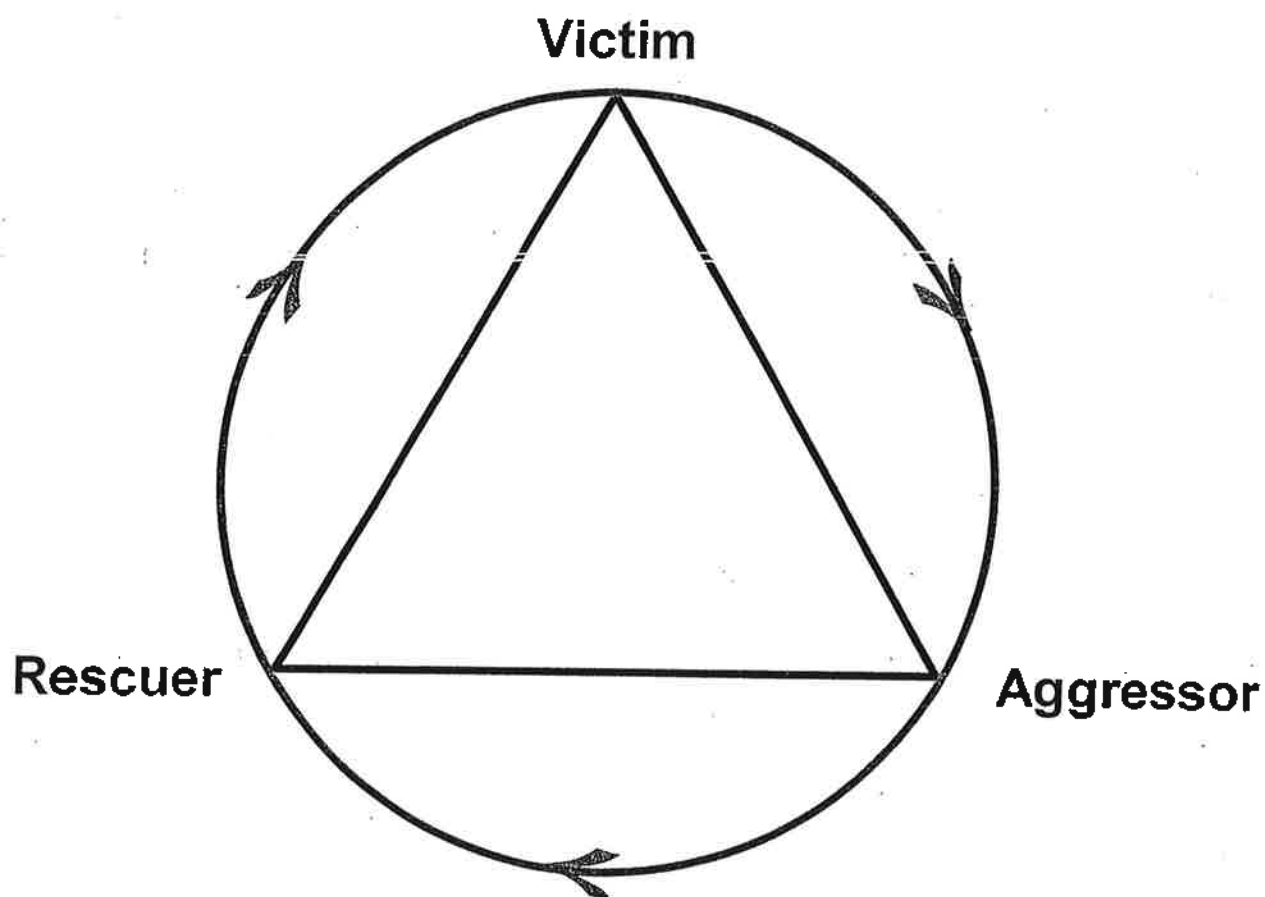


Figure 2: Antagonistic Conflict

Reactive Triangle



Unconscious Looping *Often called Triangulation*

Unconscious looping flourishes in an outer-directed, either/or culture that believes power is external and that some people have it and others do not. It provides the basic plotline that culture programs us to believe is reality. It drives mass entertainment and advertising and forms the core of much of the political, economic, social, and religious thinking in this country.

The Rising Strong Process

The goal of the process is to rise from our falls, overcome our mistakes, and face hurt in a way that brings more wisdom and wholeheartedness into our lives.

THE RECKONING: WALKING INTO OUR STORY

Recognize emotion, and get curious about our feelings and how they connect with the way we think and behave.

THE RUMBLE: OWNING OUR STORY

Get honest about the stories we're making up about our struggle, then challenge these confabulations and assumptions to determine what's truth, what's self-protection, and what needs to change if we want to lead more wholehearted lives.

THE REVOLUTION

Write a new ending to our story based on the key learnings from our rumble and use this new, braver story to change how we engage with the world and to ultimately transform the way we live, love, parent, and lead.

From: Rising Strong: How the Ability to Reset transforms the way we Live, Love, Parent and Lead by Brené Brown
Random House Paperback 2017

Getting to Yes

Fisher, Roger, William Ury. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.*

Adapted by: the Rev. Carrie Schofield-Broadbent

1. SEPARATE THE PEOPLE FROM THE PROBLEM

- Both Substance of Conflict and Relationship are important.
- The person/ people we're dealing with in conflict are beloved children of God.
 - Try to understand the others' point of view (and their maps)
 - Put yourself in their shoes
 - Don't deduce their intentions from your fears
 - Don't blame them for your problem.
 - Make sure your proposals are consistent with their values and maps
- Recognize your emotions and theirs
 - Acknowledge them as legitimate
 - Allow for "letting off steam"
 - Don't react out of emotion.
- Use Good Communication Skills
 - Active Listening
 - Speak to be understood
 - Use "reports". Be careful about inferences. Avoid judging language
 - Speak about yourself (not them). "I statements"

2. FOCUS ON INTERESTS, NOT POSITIONS

- Interests define the problem
 - Behind opposed positions lie shared and compatible interests as well as conflicting ones
 - Identifying Issues:
 - Ask Clarifying Questions:
 - Why? & Why not?
 - What would that do for you?
 - How would that work?

- Realize that each side has multiple interests
- The most powerful interests are basic human needs
- Acknowledge interests as part of the problem
- Look forward, not backward
- Be concrete but flexible
- Be hard on the problem, soft on the people

3. INVENT OPTIONS FOR MUTUAL GAIN

- When serving as a third party in a dispute, remember:
 - it's best for the people in conflict to come up with their own solutions
- Avoid Pitfalls:
 - Premature Judgment
 - Try to suspend your inner critic for a time
 - Searching for a Single Answer
 - Don't stop brainstorming ideas until they've run out.
 - The Assumption of a "fixed pie" (that options are limited)
- Separate Inventing (options) from deciding
 - Set the stage for brainstorming
 - Look for Mutual Gain
 - Identify shared interests
 - Dovetail differing interests

4. INSIST ON USING OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

- Fair Standards
- Fair Procedures
- Reason and be Open to Reason
- Don't yield to pressure

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS TRAINING

Suggested Reading List

***Smart Leaders, Smarter Teams: How You and Your Team get Unstuck to Get Results* by Roger Schwarz**

From Amazon.com: More than ever, effective leadership requires us to work as a team, but many leaders struggle to get the results they need. When stakes are high, you can't get great results by just changing what you do. You also need to change how you think. Organizational psychologist and leadership consultant Roger Schwarz applies his 30+ years of experience working with leadership teams to reveal how leaders can drastically improve results by changing their individual and team mindset.

- Provides practical guidance to help teams increase decision quality, decrease implementation time, foster innovation, get commitment, reduce costs and increase trust
- Outlines 5 core values leadership teams can adopt to exponentially improve results
- Author of *The Skilled Facilitator* and *The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook*

***Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss what Matters Most* by Stone, Patton, and Heen**

From Amazon.com: We attempt or avoid difficult conversations every day-whether dealing with an underperforming employee, disagreeing with a spouse, or negotiating with a client. From the Harvard Negotiation Project, the organization that brought you *Getting to Yes, Difficult Conversations* provides a step-by-step approach to having those tough conversations with less stress and more success. you'll learn how to:

- Decipher the underlying structure of every difficult conversation
- Start a conversation without defensiveness
- Listen for the meaning of what is not said
- Stay balanced in the face of attacks and accusations
- Move from emotion to productive problem solving

***Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In* by Roger Fisher and William Ury**

From Amazon.com: Since its original publication nearly thirty years ago, *Getting to Yes* has helped millions of people learn a better way to negotiate. One of the primary business texts of the modern era, it is based on the work of the Harvard Negotiation Project, a group that deals with all levels of negotiation and conflict resolution.

Getting to Yes offers a proven, step-by-step strategy for coming to mutually acceptable agreements in every sort of conflict. Thoroughly updated and revised, it offers readers a straight-forward, universally applicable method for negotiating personal and professional disputes without getting angry-or getting taken.

***Moving Your Church Through Conflict* by Speed Leas**

From Amazon.com: With this how-to manual written for clergy and lay leaders, learn exactly what to do when conflict arises. Leas' highly acclaimed theory of conflict levels spells out appropriate responses. Easily applicable concepts and practical strategies.

***Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work & in Life, One Conversation at a Time* by Susan Scott**

From Amazon.com

The master teacher of positive change through powerful communication, Susan Scott wants you to succeed. To do that, she explains, you must transform everyday conversations at work and at home with effective ways to get your message across—and get what you want. In this guide, which includes a workbook and *The Seven Principles of Fierce Conversations*, Scott teaches you how to:

- Overcome barriers to meaningful communication
- Expand and enrich relationships with colleagues, friends, and family
- Increase clarity and improve understanding
- Handle strong emotions—on both sides of the table
- Connect with colleagues, customers and family at a deep level

***Rising Strong: How the Ability to Reset Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* by Brené Brown**

From Amazon.com: Social scientist Brené Brown has ignited a global conversation on courage, vulnerability, shame, and worthiness. Her pioneering work uncovered a profound truth: Vulnerability—the willingness to show up and be seen with no guarantee of outcome—is the only path to more love, belonging, creativity, and joy. But living a brave life is not always easy: We are, inevitably, going to stumble and fall.

It is the rise from falling that Brown takes as her subject in *Rising Strong*. As a grounded theory researcher, Brown has listened as a range of people—from leaders in Fortune 500 companies and the military to artists, couples in long-term relationships, teachers, and parents—shared their stories of being brave, falling, and getting back up. She asked herself, What do these people with strong and loving relationships, leaders nurturing creativity, artists pushing innovation, and clergy walking with people through faith and mystery have in common? The answer was clear: They recognize the power of emotion and they're not afraid to lean in to discomfort.

Walking into our stories of hurt can feel dangerous. But the process of regaining our footing in the midst of struggle is where our courage is tested and our values are forged. Our stories of struggle can be big ones, like the loss of a job or the end of a relationship, or smaller ones, like a conflict with a friend or colleague. Regardless of magnitude or circumstance, the rising strong process is the same: We reckon with our emotions and get curious about what we're feeling; we rumble with our stories until we get to a place of truth; and we live this process, every day, until it becomes a practice and creates nothing short of a revolution in our lives. Rising strong after a fall is how we cultivate wholeheartedness. It's the process, Brown writes, that teaches us the most about who we are.

... and any other works by Brene Brown

***Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life* by Ronald W. Richardson**

From Amazon.com: Ronald W. Richardson helps us to understand how congregations function emotionally. Without being simplistic, he gives clear directions on how to improve their quality of life together and function more effectively in achieving mission goals. This book offers: A theory about human behavior that will aid understanding of how things can get out of control in the human community of the church; A practical set of leadership ideas and behaviors; Guidelines for how to behave in the midst of upsetting and conflictual circumstances; Personal steps that leaders in the church can take to become more positive forces for healing and cooperation.